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Pesticide Drift Reduction Starts Now

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ICM News

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The number of drift complaints in 2007 regarding ground applications of agricultural pesticides received by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship increased by 36 percent compared to 2006, and was nearly double that of 2004.

The first step in preventing problems with drift is to develop an effective drift management strategy prior to the spray season. Important considerations include:

- equipping sprayers with appropriate spray nozzles,
- effective use of drift retardants,
- sprayer setup - boom height, operating pressure and driving speed,
- identification of drift sensitive locations (organic production, vineyards or other high value crops, concerned neighbors), and

- proper education of personnel operating the sprayers.

While advances in spray technology have improved our ability to keep pesticides on target, successful management of drift ultimately relies on good judgment by the sprayer operator.

By Bob Hartzler is a professor weed science with extension, teaching, and research responsibilities.

Category: Crop Production | Insects and Mites | Pesticide Education

Tags: pesticide drift | spraying

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Bob Hartzler is a Professor of Agronomy and an Extension Weed Specialist. Hartzler conducts research on weed biology and how it impacts the efficacy of weed management programs in corn and soybean. He also teaches undergraduate classes in weed science and weed iden...